

**U.S. Coast Guard Academy
Institute for Leadership**

Inaugural Tyler Chair Leadership Address

delivered by

Admiral James M. Loy, USCG (Ret.)

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Thank you Cadet Baxa..... and good evening ladies and gentlemen. I'm honored to be with you all this evening to talk a little bit about my favorite subject and go back to work tomorrow inspired yet again by having participated in the gathering of the Corps of Cadets.

It's always nice to be back home. There's a certain "magic" about this place...a magic about what we learn and experience here. Part of that magic is that it continues to grow when we leave. It underpins a life of service and performance. It forges a lifetime of friendships far deeper than can be imagined by anyone who has not experienced it. It's simply magic and for those of you still immersed in it, you'll see what I mean as the years go by.

My responsibilities tonight are several, some mandated, some volunteered. You see, even after 45 years of public service, you're still often told what to do by these youngsters called Superintendents. It is such a great gift to let them think they are in charge, when each of us, here, who has been a firsty, really knows better!!

So, tonight I want to share with you my enthusiasm and excitement for the new Institute for Leadership, and I know that my enthusiasm will be contagious when you learn about the early projects that we will be undertaking. I also want to publicly thank Dr. James Tyler for his extraordinary generosity. Finally, I want to share some private thoughts with you about commitment and sacrifice, which I believe to be two of the cornerstones of leadership. In fact those particular words I'll ask you to concentrate on and maybe leave this auditorium a bit more focused on what they mean as leadership discriminators.

FIRST, THE INSTITUTE AND THE TYLER CHAIR FOR LEADERSHIP

Many might say we already have an LDC and we already have leadership education and training centered in most everything we do here. So, why do we need another leadership forum? Our notion is there is never too much leadership exposure and if we build this correctly, we might be able to produce a “best in class” construct that will carry the Coast Guard and its Academy’s reputation far and wide. We have even discussed how five years from now we may be hosting leaders from other services, from the civilian side of government....even from the world of Academe or Corporate America. We hope they may be fighting for the chance to come here to share and to learn. We imagine there might be additional Chairs under the Institute’s umbrella....perhaps one in Ethics or one in Diversity. Reality, today, is that the Alumni Association and the Coast Guard Foundation, with the Superintendent’s okay, have gathered the many funds from private donors or Academy classes with a leadership flavor into a single pot of resource capability. This will challenge us to satisfy the original intent of the donors, but do so in dramatically more meaningful ways. We haven’t figured those ways out yet, but both Dr. Tyler and I have been very impressed with the three planning sessions

we've had and with the positive participation we've had from the Corps, the faculty and many others. Two areas of study on which we intend to embark are these:

- First, we're often told that it is five years after graduation, before young Academy graduates finally realize what a special place and special experience the Academy was in their lives. We're going to find ways to move that epiphany forward in time. We want cadets to be proud of their leadership development process while it's happening, as well as years later. We've had initial sessions with cadet leaders. Just last night I spent an hour and a half with CDR Jon Heller and the Regimental Leadership. In that short 60 minutes, we identified a number of very promising dimensions to this issue. Even more important, we began a constructive dialogue on how to proceed.
- Second, we want the Academy's reputation as a leadership center of excellence to be much more widely known. We want counselors and secondary school principals across America, when asked by a parent for suggestions as to where their son or daughters might matriculate for a solid foundation in leadership, to always have the Coast Guard Academy on their short list of recommendations. This is basically a marketing challenge we intend to take on.

Another project underway is work Don Phillips and I are doing on the development of a Leadership Model. We want to build a model based on our mutual work over the years. Don has written 9 books on Leadership including **"Character in Action"**, the one he allowed me to help with! He has thought about a generic leadership model for years and you have all heard me extol the virtues of Eisenhower's three-dimensional model of native ability, opportunity and

knowledge of craft. There's a diamond in that pile somewhere and we aim to find it as the first deliverable for the Institute. I hope you get the idea that we're not standing up the Institute to deliver some preconceived product. We are on a quest...a journey wherein we know there is no absolute end game. The lore of our notion is that we need a leadership model that first and always embraces CHANGE. We want every good or imagined idea to be considered. If you have one, send it to Glenn Sulmasy or John Dettleff so we can get it on the table.

I've mentioned Jim Tyler twice so far. If I said his name one hundred more times tonight, it would not do justice to his generous gift to the United States Coast Guard Academy Alumni Association. He's attended all of our planning sessions and is deeply interested, personally, in our work. Tonight he sails the high seas on his **"around the world sail"** and I believe he's somewhere in the vastness of the South China Sea. Jim was in the Class of 1958, stayed here for 3 years, and then left to finish his undergraduate work at WPI. He headed for Silicon Valley in California and became a very, very successful businessman and entrepreneur. He traces his success in business and in life to the foundations of learning and decision-making he learned here. His generosity raises the likelihood we'll be able to support that learning process even better for cadets today and into the future. That is the *raison d'être* of this Institute. We who work here in these early days will be forever grateful to Jim for his ideas, his participation and, of course, his enabling dollars. So in the great tradition of waking up audiences at Corp wide lectures, let's give Jim Tyler some thanks. Everybody up!!!! --- Turn to the person next to you and say **"Thank you Jim!"** We'll take a picture and email it to Dr. Tyler in the Straits of Malacca. If the person next to you is not a Jim, tell them to wake up!!!!

Think about it folks, Jim Van Sice, Jim Tyler, Jim Loy, Jim Thomas, the Alumni Association's Jim Sylvester, the Foundation's Jim Link. There's a theme

here somewhere!!!! There'll be a judge at the door for anyone who wants to change their name!!!! The Regimental Commander has already seen the light. Just before we started, he saw the judge. I'd like to introduce you all to Cadet 1/c Jim Baxa. Okay, sit down now and pay attention!!!! By the way, that's directional leadership!!!!!!

COMMITMENT AND SACRIFICE

Now, A word or two about commitment and sacrifice.

Forty-one years ago, I concluded my service as a cadet and began a journey that took me to many exciting places. For me it was a ride I never imagined..... exciting, dangerous at times, and humbling often. I learned to go to sea and love every minute of it....not bad for a kid from Pennsylvania, whose exposure to water was either jumping naked off a cliff into an abandoned limestone quarry or having paddle battles from rowboats on the local Amusement Park Lake, manmade and all of 1 foot deep!

The vast majority of us are born landmen and most die landmen, never having had a chance to gaze upon the long horizon of an open sea. We privileged few are able to feast our eyes upon the dazzling spectacle of green water bursting mountains of force against a granite headland. We privileged few get to experience the fear and anguish of leadership challenges at sea...and the indefinable exhilaration of conquering both, and accomplishing the mission. We privileged few see the magic of stilled waters, reflecting in strange patterns the towering clouds of a wondrous sky as if in some fanciful dream. We privileged few see the endless and variable pageant of the ocean's moods. Its myriad voices...from the languid whispers of an incoming tide, to the earth shaking thunder of a perfect storm; from the piercing scream of a gale in the North Atlantic

in February to the long rolling pattern of the Pacific in mid latitudes. We, the privileged few, get to listen to this music and dream our dreams. What is the price we pay for such a priceless experience? The price is the obligation to learn about commitment and sacrifice as the foundations of a commissioned leader's competence. What did I learn in the rivers and coastal waters of South Vietnam in 1967 that helped me be a productive member of the President's cabinet? What was learned here that helped Jim Tyler succeed in business or helped me design a better strategic plan for the Department of Homeland Security? Let me tell you a couple stories about real people that might help us understand.

When I was here in July, I was privileged to spend an hour or so with the new Class of 2009. We talked together about Alexander Hamilton and the many contributions he made during the Revolutionary War and the first years of our new Republic. We spoke of his extraordinary commitment to the Cause of Independence and the many sacrifices he endured in the service of his adopted country.

I just finished David McCullough's latest book "1776". It chronicles that most fateful year of our birth as a nation. We all remember it as the year the Declaration of Independence was drafted and announced. It was so much more than that. We often lose appreciation of the fear and anguish that accompanied the times. We don't take the time to ensure that each of our succeeding generations truly understands the commitment and sacrifice of those who have gone before us..."**the Greatest Generation**", those who expanded to the western frontiers, those that **"bound up the Nation's Wounds"** and most importantly, those **"Founding Fathers"** who penned the Declaration, fought desperately for 7 years and consecrated into the Constitution, the very ideals we hold priceless today. We memorialize these figures but we do not take the time to truly understand their commitment and sacrifice.

Fear and anguish have accompanied virtually every critical or uncertain period of our nation's history, including most definitely now. Those who have been leaders in those times have acknowledged the fear and anguish but have risen above it and conquered it...and therein lies the true meaning of commitment and sacrifice and the identification of enlightened leaders. Numbers help us a bit to understand fear and anguish. In the crude bookkeeping of the day, we can build a table of dead and wounded and prisoners. We can begin to understand the hardship of forced winter marches with no shoes; of forging rivers with cannon and wagons; of a Congress without the ability to pay or support the Army. Washington has been idolized and lionized for his commitment and sacrifice. 6 years in the field with his soldiers, 1 stop at his home, Mt Vernon, and even that – a stop-over on his way to Yorktown when his path took him directly by. A constant inspiration to his troops in battle and in times of desperate hope. Troops who stood with him in 1776 from Dorchester Heights in Boston to Brooklyn and Long Island to White Plains and the loss of FT. WASHINGTON, to the abandonment of FT LEE and the long march across New Jersey. Troops who inspired their entire nation with a 45 minute skirmish with the Hessians at Trenton on Christmas Day after crossing the Delaware, not as depicted in **Emanuel Gottlieb Leutze's famous "George Washington Crossing the Delaware,"** but with extraordinary commitment and sacrifice.

- Brooklyn - 300 dead/1000 wounded/prisoners
- White Plains – 125 dead
- Ft. Washington – 59 dead/ 100 wounded

Let me read for you a short passage from McCullough. (**page 293**)

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“IT WAS WASHINGTON WHO HELD THE ARMY TOGETHER AND GAVE IT “SPIRIT” THROUGH THE MOST DESPERATE OF TIMES.

HE WAS NOT A BRILLIANT STRATEGIST OR TACTICIAN, NOT A GIFTED ORATOR, NOT AN INTELLECTUAL. AT SEVERAL CRUCIAL MOMENTS HE HAD SHOWN MARKED INDECISIVENESS. HE HAD MADE SERIOUS MISTAKES IN JUDGMENT. BUT EXPERIENCE HAD BEEN HIS GREAT TEACHER FROM BOYHOOD, AND IN THIS HIS GREATET TEST, HE LEARNED STEADILY FROM EXPERIENCE. ABOVE ALL, WASHINGTON NEVER FORGOT WHAT WAS AT STAKE AND HE NEVER GAVE UP.

AGAIN AND AGAIN, IN LETTERS TO CONGRESS AND TO HIS OFFICERS, AND IN HIS GENERAL ORDERS, HE HAD CALLED FOR PERSEVERANCE—FOR “PERSEVERANCE AND SPIRIT,” FOR “PATIENCE AND PERSEVERANCE,” FOR “UNREMITTING COURAGE AND PERSEVERANCE.” SOON AFTER THE VICTORIES OF TRENTON AND PRINCETON, HE HAD WRITTEN: “A PEOPLE UNUSED TO RESTRAINT MUST BE LED, THEY WILL NOT BE DROVE.” WITHOUT WASHINGTON’S LEADERSHIP AND UNRELENTING PERSEVERANCE, THE REVOLUTION ALMOST CERTAINLY WOULD HAVE FAILED. AS NATHANAEL GREENE FORESAW AS THE WAR WENT ON, “HE WILL BE THE DELIVERER OF HIS OWN COUNTRY.”

THE WAR WAS A LONGER, FAR MORE ARDUOUS, AND MORE PAINFUL STRUGGLE THAN LATER GENERATIONS WOULD UNDERSTAND OR SUFFICIENTLY APPRECIATE. BY THE

TIME IT ENDED, IT HAD TAKEN THE LIVES OF AN ESTIMATED 25,000 AMERICANS, OR ROUGHLY 1 PERCENT OF THE POPULATION. IN PERCENTAGE OF LIVES LOST, IT WAS THE MOST COSTLY WAR IN AMERICAN HISTORY, EXCEPT THE CIVIL WAR.

THE YEAR 1776, CELEBRATED AS THE BIRTH YEAR OF THE NATION AND FOR THE SIGNING OF THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE, WAS FOR THOSE WHO CARRIED THE FIGHT FOR INDEPENDENCE FORWARD A YEAR OF ALL-TOO-FEW VICTORIES, OF SUSTAINED SUFFERING, DISEASE, HUNGER, DESERTION, COWARDICE, DISILLUSIONMENT, DEFEAT, TERRIBLE DISCOURAGEMENT, AND FEAR, AS THEY WOULD NEVER FORGET, BUT ALSO OF PHENOMENAL COURAGE AND BEDROCK DEVOTION TO COUNTRY, AND THAT, TOO, THEY WOULD NEVER FORGET.”

That ladies and gentleman, is what we have been given to fight for today

A bit lighter example is golfing great Phil Mickelson. 2 weeks ago he won his second major tournament at the PGA. Until last year's Masters, he was the best professional golfer **Never** to win a major. His evolution from a reputation as a lazy, talent-wasting player, to committed champion has not been easy. He now, however, represents a valuable lesson for us all. His evolution suggests that you can **learn** to win. Winning is not just a quality some people are born with and others aren't. 43 times he tried and failed to win a major.. 8 top 10's at the Masters, 7 in the PGA. No Wins!!! But at this PGA, preparation replaces laxness and adaptability of his game to the course becomes a ticket to success. Not unlike General George Marshall found Eisenhower's preparation worthy of promotion

and critical assignments, the PGA found Mickelson's preparation worthy of a championship win. Commitment to task.....sacrifice and win.

James Bradley is the son of 1 of the 6 young men who raised the flag on IWO JIMA. His dad John, was from Antigo, Wisconsin. Jim says his dad refused to talk to the press. When Walter Conkrite's producers or the New York Times would call, Jim and his brothers were trained to say "No, sorry, my dad's fishing in Canada and we don't know when he'll be back". Jim says his dad never fished or ever went to Canada. He was usually right there at the table but he didn't want to talk about the War. The press wanted to talk to this WWII hero. John Bradley knew better. He was a medic on IWO JIMA, where hundreds of young marines died in his arms. He remembered when they died; they writhed and screamed in pain. Jim told his dad the teachers in school called him a hero. John Bradley made it clear to his young son that the heroes on IWO JIMA were those boys (7,000 of them) who did NOT come home because of their *commitment and sacrifice.*

The granite foyer in Chase Hall is emblazoned with the words "WHO LIVES HERE REVERES HONOR, HONORS DUTY" I believe that to be the epicenter of our Coast Guard.... not Headquarters, not the Superintendent's office and not even the deck of that pitching ship at sea. Chase Hall is where leadership comes alive. It is sacred, hallowed ground. From there springs national citizens – citizens who lead the way in government, business and academia – citizens who begin and often complete their professional lives in Coast Guard blue. Those citizens are the privileged few.

CLOSING:

Yesterday afternoon at Arlington National Cemetery I joined family, friends and 22 other classmates of Lewis Wentworth Parker and laid him to rest. We 23 classmates came from all over the country to pay our last respects to Lew and to support his family. He received the full military honors he had earned with his active service. It was a beautifully poignant ceremony conducted flawlessly by the Coast Guard Honor Guard. Arlington National Cemetery is at once the saddest and most peaceful place on earth. Endless rows of single stones, etching indelibly in your mind what sacrifice is all about. The ceremony and the stones tell us freedom is NOT free. They remind all who pause long enough to reflect, that war is a terrible thing. They remind us in astonishingly simple directness that the words in the Declaration of Independence and the concepts in the Constitution must not be taken for granted. Indeed they must be remembered and refreshed generation after generation, lest America's epitaph some day say simply "she forgot what she stood for".

Each stone has a magic connection to the real person beneath it. Lewis Wentworth Parker came to this place from Auburn, New York. We called him Lewie or sometimes "Giggles" because of his constant smile and marvelously engaging personality. He loved the water and his family vacationed often at campsites on the "finger lakes" of upstate New York. In 1960 he met Steve Martin from Annapolis, Maryland, another of our classmates, who had sailed most of his life, and brought a reputation of sailing excellence to CGA. By 1972, these two classmates of mine were national champions together.....Steve, the Coxswain with Lewie as his crew, won the North American Dinghy Championship over all the heavy competition including Division One schools. Frankly, they clobbered anyone who showed up with a dinghy and a tiller. They were the very best in America at what they did. They led the way, as a team, as CGA classmates, as world class

competitors. Steve was also at Arlington yesterday to say a final goodbye to the crewmember from Auburn who became his life's best friend. On the water together then, they were like a wisp of ghostlike motion. They thought together as one, and executed every maneuver with textbook perfection. Through their success on the water, they led the rest of us to reach a bit higher, to try harder, to excel. That what's taught and learned here. In largely the same way the folks in Latrobe, Pennsylvania take crystal clear water and add in just the right blend of malt and hops to produce one of those famous Green Pony bottles of Rolling Rock beer, those of us here, entrusted with developing the leaders of tomorrow's Coast Guard, provide the opportunities that enable growth to occur and quality to emerge.

I think often about the times in my life when I was being shaped. I was blessed to have an elementary teacher for a mother and a father who suffered fools, especially me...badly. Teaching and learning, testing and improving; sometimes we don't even recognize the shaping as it occurs. I remember ministers and coaches, counselors and Scout leaders.....people who took an interest in me and helped prepare me for life. Mostly in those moments of soft reflection, I remember this place, this Coast Guard Academy, this tabernacle of development, this extraordinary place where people helped shape me for my future.

They stretched me, allowed me to fail and be restored.... tested and encouraged me. General MacArthur bid farewell to West Point dreaming aloud that there would always be The Corps, The Corps...The Corps. Each of us privileged to attend here can dream that very same dream.

Dr. Tyler has generously offered us a chance to design a step-function increase in our commitment to leadership development – so each of you in the Corps will also be able to appreciate, now and throughout your lives, that which we’ve come to know so well. Those who matriculate here get a chance at the magic. But it’s a magic that must be learned and earned. It’s the same magic that drove General Washington in 1776, the same magic that kept James Bradley’s father silent and encouraged his son to speak out, the same magic that lifts the spirits of the entire Corps when any in their number, like Lewie Parker, gains recognition for excellence. The common ground here is people who worry little about themselves and more about the team or mission. This magic can’t be passed out in boxes or issued by the pound. It’s gradually absorbed in a lifetime of performance. It’s maximizing your potential when your opportunity presents itself. It’s a never-ending commitment that emerges afresh when needed most. It’s about commitment and sacrifice. It’s remembering where it all became real. For me, very simply that was right here. My fondest wish for each of you is that you, too, will come to understand the magic.